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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000323

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A  
NSC FOR WOOD  
OSD FOR SHIVERS  
CENTCOM FOR CG CJTF-82 POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/29/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: PRT LAGHMAN: NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAMS PREVENT  
IED STRIKES

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Classified By: ADCM Brent Hartley for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary. Neighborhood watch programs proved successful in countering a spike in the use of IEDs in Laghman province. IED attacks rose sharply in Laghman province in 2007, resulting in a six-fold increase in casualties to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Insurgents used better equipment to enhance IED destructive capability. In response, the PRT and a U.S. military counter-IED task force implemented a range of neighborhood watch and informant programs that are gaining traction in preventing IED emplacements. The programs rely heavily on local villagers to detect suspicious activity and quickly report information to ANSF and coalition forces (CF). As a result, Laghman's population reported twice as many IEDs as insurgents detonated.

#### 2007--IED Threat Spikes and Targets ANSF

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¶2. (S) In 2007, the foremost security threat in Laghman province was the significant spike in the number and lethality of IEDs placed on provincial roads, bridges, and culverts. IED emplacements more than doubled from 29 in 2006 to 59 in 2007. (An IED placed on the road or on a bridge counts as an emplacement whether the IED is found before it can be used or is detonated by attacking insurgents.) Most successful attacks targeted ANSF, and ANSF casualties from IED strikes increased from one killed and four wounded in 2006 to 17 killed and 14 wounded in 2007. IEDs were also used against PRT convoys, resulting in one U.S. soldier killed and nine wounded.

#### Population Reports Most IEDs When Found

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¶3. (S) Despite the seriousness of the threat, security forces avoided the majority of attacks because the population reported two IEDs for every one successfully detonated. Of the 59 IED emplacements in 2007, provincial residents either found and reported or physically brought to Afghan or coalition security forces 40 IED emplacements. Insurgents detonated the remaining IEDs in direct attacks, although eight of these missed their intended targets.

#### Village Watch Programs

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¶4. (SBU) Neighborhood watch and informant programs implemented by Task Force Paladin (a U.S. military counter-IED unit in Afghanistan) and the PRT are a major factor in preventing IED attacks. The pilot program "Village Watch" began in June 2007, aiming to mobilize local residents to act as the eyes and ears for security force efforts to disrupt IED attacks. Village Watch programs begin by gathering village leaders for a meeting led by Governor Mangal, Afghan National Police (ANP) provincial chief General Omaryar, and PRT and maneuver element leadership. Security officials challenge village elders to take responsibility for what happens around their homes, much like neighborhood watch programs in the United States. The PRT encourages elders to watch for outsiders and to report criminal acts or suspicious activity such as unauthorized digging in local roadways. Elders are reminded that IEDs kill far more Afghan civilians than CF. The PRT and ANP organized four village cluster meetings in 2007 with more planned for 2008. Villagers trained as part of Village Watch have detected and reported numerous IED emplacements to ANSF or the PRT since the program began.

¶5. (SBU) TF Paladin began other programs with PRT support:

¶A. Bridge Watch: Since July 2007, a specially trained unit of 30 ANP officers have performed daily inspections of bridge and culvert crossings along provincial roads, searching for signs of IED emplacements.

¶B. Mothers Against IEDs: In January 2008, the PRT began a new project designed to incorporate women into the Village Watch concept. General Omaryar, Sharin Taj, the provincial line director for the Ministry of Women,s Affairs, the three female provincial council members, and the PRT led a startup meeting with 100 female participants from across the

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province. Sharin Taj and General Omaryar encouraged the women to report suspicious activity to the PCC. Trained women located at the provincial women,s center also take reports.

¶C. Tips Project: This program facilitates information gathering from the village population after an IED attack or other significant security event. The ANP distribute flyers printed in Dari and Pashto with requests to report any information to the ANP and the PCC. Public radio announcements, billboards, bumper stickers, and business card-sized handouts advertising the PCC phone number supplement the flyers. ANP distribution creates more police interaction with the local population and lets insurgents know that security forces are actively hunting them. The PRT and maneuver element provide security support during these operations. The PRT will soon install newsstands holding the flyers and other informational materials in Mehtarlam city and district market centers.

¶6. (SBU) Until IED cells are identified and disrupted, Village Watch and informant programs offer the best hope of encouraging Laghman,s population to report IEDs. Once the IED threat is mitigated, Laghman,s relative lack of major insurgent operations will leave an environment conducive to development, NGO presence, and the extension of governance to remote areas.

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